The study of language learning in multilingual education: students' perceptions of their language learning experience in Basque, Spanish and English

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Abstract

This paper focuses on teaching techniques for language learning as related to student satisfaction on multilingual compulsory education in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), where Basque and Spanish are official languages and English is taught as a foreign language. Using a multilingual approach, the paper discusses similarities and differences between the relationships found for the teaching techniques and the satisfaction levels in the three languages (Basque, Spanish and English). The results of the T-test analysis show significant differences between the three languages in the use of teaching techniques and levels of satisfaction. Additionally, the patterns of relationship between the teaching techniques and the language learning satisfaction levels show some weak relationship in the three languages, being learner-centred teaching techniques related to satisfaction levels. Results are explained according to some assumptions in language acquisition, and related to the context of the study. Finally, we discuss some opportunities for language teaching in multilingual contexts with a minority language.

Introduction

Research shows that second (L2) and third (L3) language acquisition differ because learners' bilingualism can influence the acquisition of additional languages (Bialystok, 2011; Cenoz, 2013). Moreover, it seems that bi/multilingual learners have some advantages when learning an additional language such as higher metalinguistic awareness, their own previous experiences in language learning, and a wider linguistic repertoire (Cenoz, 2013). These advantages should determine the teaching techniques teachers are to develop and use with multilingual learners (see also García & Wei, 2014), and students' perceptions should be considered as an essential yardstick to define these teaching techniques. In this vein, studies that assess language learning from a multilingual perspective are still scarce and, up to our knowledge, there are no studies exploring

pedagogical practices as related to students' perception and levels of satisfaction from a multilingual perspective. In order to avoid the monolingual bias, in this article we consider multilingual students' entire linguistic repertoire as related to their experience as language learners (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). This approach gives us insight on students' perceptions on their overall language learning process as multilinguals, and allows us define which are the techniques that optimise their learning. In this line, we argue that language teaching should be designed differently when teaching monolinguals and multilinguals, and propose to consider students' perceptions to define the teaching approaches in each of the languages as if they were interdependent and connected (Herdina & Jessner, 2002).

The current study was conducted in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), located in the northern of Spain, in which two official languages coexist: Basque (the minority language) and Spanish (the majority language). Regarding the languages of instruction in the education system, 65.7% of the students have Basque as the medium of instruction, 15.8% have Spanish and 17.9% have both (EUSTAT, 2020). Additionally, the role of English as a foreign language (EFL) has become increasingly prominent in recent years with most schoolchildren learning English at the age of four, in kindergarten. Moreover, the teaching of content using English as the medium of instruction or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is not new, and many are the subjects taught in English in primary and secondary education in the BAC (see, Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). Therefore, our social context is shaped not only for being multilingual, but also for involving a minority language at all levels of education (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019).

In order to relate a desirable swift from a monolingual to a multilingual paradigm in language teaching with students' perception on their own language learning process as multilinguals, we first look at some research in teaching that has defined the language policy and the efforts to adopt an integrative approach to languages in the BAC. Then, we explain the main language teaching approaches that can enhance students' interest and learning, and present some research on how considering students' self-perceptions and satisfaction of their language learning experience in primary and secondary education is essential. We sum our research interests in three main questions related to: (i) language satisfaction, (ii) differences in the teaching techniques, and (iii) the relationship between the teaching techniques and language satisfaction in the three languages (Basque, Spanish and English), and we present statistically treated quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, we discuss the results and pedagogical implications of this type of research.

From a monolingual to multilingual paradigm in language teaching

The transferability of linguistic and non-linguistic elements has been widely investigated (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). Yet, little is known about the teaching approaches that facilitate this transferability. Pedagogical approaches such as 'teaching for transfer' (Cummins, 2017), 'teaching through a multilingual lens' (Cummins & Persad, 2014) or pedagogical translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017) aim at facilitating the transferability of students' linguistic and non-linguistic resources across languages.

O'Duibhir and Cummins (2012) extensively described the integrated language Curriculum approach, which, in short, consist on cross-referencing the first language (L1) curriculum with the second language (L2) curriculum and the foreign language (FL) curriculum and use as far as possible the same structures and descriptors the linguistic competence

and outcomes for each language. This facilitates teachers to promote the transfer of content and skills across languages. In fact, the last Basque educational law (Decree of Education, 236/2015) takes over this approach, which brings the ideal of plurilingualism and the construct of communicative competence together (see, Coste et al., 2009). This law advocates for teaching languages in an integrated way on the basis that, on the one hand, the plurilingual student has different languages and a wide variety of linguistic knowledge in their cognitive and emotional endowment. On the other hand, much of the language learning is common to all languages and can be transferred by bilingual or plurilingual speakers from one language to another. The integrated approach to language teaching requires working on the particularities of each language on their own and sharing what they have in common. With regard to language teachers, it makes them reflect and adjust their teaching strategies in order to encourage students to use what they have learned in one language to learn the others.

In the context of the current study, Basque education administration has taken steps towards an integrative approach in language teaching through the legislation (Article 11, Decree of Education, 236/2015, p. 15) and in-service teacher training (Gorter & Arocena, 2020). Nowadays, the education law for language teaching adopts an integrative approach for the two languages and establishes the same objectives, content and evaluation criteria for both languages across primary and secondary education (Decree of Education, 236/2015, pp. 161–164/191–198). Within the same integrative scope, these components of the curriculum are adapted for English to adequate to the level expected to achieve.

Language teaching practices in L2 and FL classrooms

Despite the concept of language teaching methods has been criticised by a number of authors (e.g. Pennycook, 1989), Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) describe a variety of language teaching methods/approaches from a historical and global perspective and discuss the potential gains from a study of methods in teacher education. In the Basque educational context, didactic sequences described by Dolz-Mestre and Gagnon (2010) have had a great impact on the teaching practices of language teachers. Overall, researchers and practicioners recognise that a universal solution is not required in language teaching methods (Widdowson, 2004), but rather practices that are designed in relation to local contexts, objectives and needs (Canagarajah, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Constructivism is the dominant learning theory in the Basque educational context. Although there are different ways to understand constructivism (Phillips, 2000), all forms of constructivism refers to learning as a learners active process of knowledge construction and meaning making. Some authors have reported that constructivist instruction could have a motivational effect for students learning (Hickey, 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). For example, Nie and Lau (2010) reported a study conducted in English classrooms with secondary education students. They found that the more constructivist instruction was used in class, the more important, interesting, and useful the tasks were perceived. In fact, teaching practices based on constructivism are characterised by authenticity and meaningfulness of learning tasks. Other experimental studies have also showed that instructional practices based on constructivism enhances students' interests (Hänze & Berger, 2007; Hickey et al., 2001).

According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013), L2 and FL teaching methodologies based on Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) indicate that switching from the traditional teacher-centred to learner-centred classrooms may be beneficial. Similarly, Antón (1999) explains that by employing Learner-centred methods teachers can engage students in the learning process by promoting learners' active mental participation, which may have a role in the L2 acquisition. In fact, the teacher's role becomes that of being a facilitator in the communication process (Nunan, 1989). The CLT also advocates for small groups to maximise communication practice and the teacher is responsible for promoting that communication. On the other hand, the learner is a communicator; someone who interacts with others, is responsible for her/his own learning, and is constantly engaged in the negotiation of meaning and sharing of ideas. In this way, CLT requires an active role on the part of the learners and increases responsibility of students for their own learning (Nunan, 1988).

Students' perceptions of their language learning experience

Effective learning is usually measured by students' results in standardised tests. However, if we are to test successful learning, we may need to consider students' self-perceptions of their outcomes. According to García (2009), learning which involves languages other than their first language, is closely related to learner identity and how that learner 'understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how the person understands possibilities for the future' (Norton, 2000, p. 4). Thus researching language learning satisfaction before tertiary education may be particularly worthy.

According to Kuo et al. (2013), student satisfaction refers to learners' perceptions of the value of their experiences in the learning process, and research shows that high satisfaction leads to higher levels of retention (Debourgh, 1999; Koseke & Koseke, 1991), higher persistence in learning (Allen & Seaman, 2008), higher motivation (Keller, 1983; Koseke & Koseke, 1991) and students' success (Keller, 1983; Noel-Levitz, 2011; Pike, 1993). Accordingly, in a multilingual context, language teaching should be coordinated, and students' perception should be assessed considering all languages in the education system.

Students' multilingualism should be the point of departure when doing research, as including their entire linguistic repertoire (i.e. a multilingual/holistic approach) will give us insights on the development of multilinguals' language learning as a whole considering all the interdependences between languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). In this line, studies that assess language learning from a multilingual approach are still scarce and, up to our knowledge, there are no studies exploring pedagogical practices as related to students' perception and levels of satisfaction from a multilingual perspective. This is way, the aim of the current study is precisely that of exploring language teaching techniques as related to students' levels of satisfaction from a multilingual approach. In order to do so, we set the study of teaching techniques for language learning within a multilingual paradigm and from learners' perspective, and summed our interests in three research questions:

Research Question 1: What is the language learning satisfaction in English, Basque and Spanish in compulsory education?
Research Question 2: Are there any differences in the amount of use of the teaching techniques during the Basque, Spanish and English sessions in compulsory education?

Research Question 3: How are teaching techniques related to language learning satisfaction (LLS)?

Methods

Participants

This study includes 101 (age ~ 22.4) multilingual learners from the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), 60 (59.4%) women and 41 (40.6%) were men. To be precise, 54 students were Business students from the Faculties of Economics and Business in Donostia and Bilbao (Elcano), and 47 students were students from the Faculty of Education in Bilbao and they all were in the third year of their degrees. According to the results of our questionnaire, participants had Basque (23%), Spanish (67%) or both (11%) as their L1, and studied English as a FL.

Our questionnaire focused on participants' language learning experiences in compulsory education (i.e. primary and secondary education). All participants had Basque, Spanish and English as language subjects and the 54% had Basque as the medium of instruction (i.e. all content subjects are taught in Basque), 17% had Spanish (i.e. all content subjects are taught in Spanish) and the 27% had both (i.e. all content subjects are taught in Basque and Spanish for a similar schooling time).

Instruments

In order to answer our research questions, we designed a questionnaire bearing multilingual parameters in mind and considered the three languages of the curriculum and the thirteen teaching techniques described by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) and Dolz-Mestre and Gagnon (2010) as they nicely summarise the most used techniques in second and foreign language teaching. The questionnaire was first reviewed by the authors of this article and then by two experts in language teaching. The questionnaire was piloted among 20 students, and these students' comments were included in order to improve the instrument (see Gillham, 2008).

The questionnaire consisted of 89 questions divided into four sections: (a) background information, (b) teaching techniques (TT), (c) language learning satisfaction (LLS) and (d) Open question. The questionnaire was provided in Basque and Spanish, and participants could choose the language of their preference. The Crombach alpha reliability coefficient was estimated to be .92.

Background information
All participants completed a background questionnaire in order to obtain personal and academic information regarding gender, age, first language and foreign language.

Teaching techniques (TT)
Thirteen teaching techniques were ad hoc explained based on the methods/approaches described by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) and the fourteenth technique was considered from Dolz-Mestre and Gagnon (2010) as it has had an impact in the Basque educational context. Students had to indicate the exposition to each technique in the

learning of English, Basque and Spanish, therefore, 14 items in each of the languages (i.e. 42 items) comprised this section. Participants completed a Likert scale (1-never; 7-always). As it is shown in Table 1, we further classified these techniques according to their focus (teacher/learner centred).

Language learning satisfaction (LLS)
The items as shown in Table 2 comprised the section related to language-learning satisfaction (LLS). The same items were included in English, Basque and Spanish with a total of 9 items per language (i.e. 27 items) for this section. Participants completed a Likert scale (1-not satisfied; 7-completely satisfied).

Open question
An open question for each language (English, Basque and Spanish) was added at the end of the questionnaire to explore students' opinions about how they would improve their language teaching in the three languages:

> Mention what aspects you think should be improved in the teaching of English/Basque/Spanish

Table 1. Items of the section teaching techniques (TT).

	Teaching techniques	Item
Teacher-centred	TT 1	Students translate literary texts in *English/Basque/Spanish* into their first language and the teacher explains grammatical rules of English/Basque/Spanish that they put into practice through exercises
	TT 2	Above all, oral language in *English/Basque/Spanish* is encouraged without using the first language so that students learn to think in the target language
	TT 3	The oral and listening activities in *English/Basque/Spanish* are repeated until they are internalised by the students and become habits.
Learner-centred	TT 4	Teaching is student-centred, the teacher provides meaningful practice, and remains silent most of the time to subordinate *English/Basque/Spanish* teaching to learning
	TT 5	Dialogues are taught in *English/Basque/Spanish* through songs, playful and artistic practice so that students overcome psychological barriers to learning
	TT 6	The *English/Basque/Spanish* teacher encourages peer learning by creating an atmosphere of tolerance and security in the classroom in which the students do not feel intimidated when participating
	TT 7	Students do listening exercises aimed at reinforcing the understanding of *English/Basque/Spanish* using activities and visual aids to clarify the meaning. Oral production is delayed until students are ready.
	TT 8	Through games and role-playings real communication situations are simulated offering students the opportunity to interact in *English/Basque/Spanish* and negotiate meanings
	TT 9	*English/Basque/Spanish* and content (mathematics, natural / social sciences, etc.) are learned at the same time with objectives and activities for both
	TT 10	Students participate in tasks related to reality that have a specific objective and clear results. The *English/Basque/Spanish* taught must be useful for the development of the task
	TT 11	Through dialogue with students in *English/Basque/Spanish*, problems related to power (political, economic, etc.) are raised and solved in real life.
	TT 12	Activities aimed at learning to learn in *English/Basque/Spanish* are carried out: teaching learning strategies, cooperative work or activities that take multiple intelligences into account
	TT 13	Students work with the tools offered by technology. Knowledge of *English/Basque/Spanish* arises through use and is shaped by experience
	TT 14	*English/Basque/Spanish* is taught through textual genres (narration, exposition, etc.) and is organised in different stages: the setting, the initial production of a text, workshops on the characteristics of textual genre and the final production

Table 2. Items of the section language learning satisfaction (LLS).

Number	Item
	Select your level of satisfaction in relation to language learning in the following aspects:
LLS1	Primary education
LLS2	Secondary education
LLS3	Baccalaureate
LLS4	University education
LLS5	Teachers' linguistic competence in the target language
LLS6	Teachers' didactic knowledge
LLS7	Teaching materials
LLS8	Teaching methodologies
LLS9	Evaluation methods

Data collection and analysis

Data was collected through questionnaires electronically distributed to students as a link via email. The e-mail included an information letter in the main body as well as information about the purposes, the importance of the study and the protection of personal data (anonymity).

In order to answer our research questions, quantitative analysis were complemented by qualitative analysis. Various Paired sample *T*-tests were conducted to analyse the differences among language learning satisfaction (LLS) in the three languages (RQ1) and teaching techniques used in the three languages (RQ2). Besides, in order to investigate how teaching methods were related to language learning satisfaction (LLS) correlation analysis were conducted (RQ3). All analysis were carried out using SPPS® statistical software package (version 20.0.0.1, IBM® Company, Armonk, NY).

Following Braun and Clarke (2006), we analysed qualitatively the responses of the open-ended question. In total, 303 answers were analysed (101 per language). The themes that arose in the open question were considered according to their relationships with language learning. These themes were received inductively, i.e. they were not linked to a previously created coding framework. Thus, our analysis was based only on the information collected from the data. We later related these results with the results of the quantitative analysis.

Results

The first research question aims at analysing the differences in the language learning satisfaction (LLS) of the participants across Basque, Spanish and English. Mean and Standard Deviation of LLS in three languages are shown in Table 3. The first four items correspond to the level of satisfaction with regard to each educational stage. Overall, students reported higher satisfaction in Spanish followed by Basque and English. Participants showed more satisfaction towards learning English in university education. As for Basque, primary education and secondary education were scored highest whilst university education and secondary education were the highest scored for Spanish.

In regard of teachers' linguistic competence in the target language, students reported the highest satisfaction in Spanish, followed by English and Basque. These results were later supported by the findings of the open-ended question as students showed some dissatisfaction in regard of their education in Basque and English as related to teachers' language-proficiency.

Table 3. Language Learning Satisfaction (LLS) in the three languages (max = 77).

Item	English		Basque		Spanish	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
LLS1. Primary education	4.03	1.65	5.58	1.26	5.53	1.41
LLS 2. Secondary education	4.19	1.68	5.36	1.51	5.72	1.18
LLS 3. Baccalaureate	4.28	1.61	5.31	1.64	5.87	1.11
LLS 4. University education	4.35	1.55	4.79	1.66	5.93	1.08
LLS 5. Teachers' language competence	5.09	1.32	5.09	1.36	5.57	1.35
LLS 6. Teachers' didactic knowledge	4.76	1.39	4.82	1.47	6.06	.98
LLS 7. Teaching materials	4.57	1.48	4.78	1.48	5.53	1.27
LLS 8. Teaching method	4.12	1.63	4.58	1.55	5.30	1.28
LLS 9. Evaluation methods	4.06	1.52	4.65	1.49	5.21	1.33

Ingeles irakasle natibo gehiago ekarri beharko lirateke [More native teachers should be brought here]. (S14-Eng)

Sarritan irakasleak ez dira euskaldunak, eta hori asko igartzen da. Ikasle batek irakasle batek baino maila altuagoa izatea lotsagarria da [Often, teachers are not Basque native speakers, which is obvious. It is embarrassing for a student to have a higher level than a teacher]. (S67-Bas)

El nivel del profesorado debe ser mayor desde los primeros años de enseñanza [Teachers' level should be higher from the beginning of school]. (S12-Bas)

Finally, the last four items of the LLS questionnaire focused on pedagogical aspects. Teachers' didactic knowledge is the highest valued aspect in the three languages.

We calculated the level of LLS of each language based on the sum of the items 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the LLS questionnaire (see Table 3) and conducted three paired *t*-test in order to see whether these scores were significantly different. The paired-samples *t*-test showed statistically significant differences between English and Basque, $t(100) = -2.037$, $p < .044$, $d = 20$. The total LLS score was significantly higher for Basque than for English. However, Cohen's d indicates a small effect size. In addition, the paired-samples *t*-test showed statistically significant differences between English and Spanish, $t(100) = -8.079$, $p < .000$, $d = 80$. In this case, Cohen's d indicates a large effect size, meaning that participants' LLS in Spanish was significantly higher than the LLS in English. Additionally, the paired-samples *t*-test also showed statistically significant differences between Basque and Spanish, $t(100) = -5.898$, $p < .000$, $d = .59$. Participants' LLS was significantly higher for Spanish than for Basque with a medium effect size according to Cohen's d.

The results from the open-ended question showed that students were more satisfied in their learning of Spanish, followed by Basque and English. Additionally, discontent with English methodology was also perceived in the qualitative data:

Deben cambiar las metodologías tradicionales y fomentar más la comunicativa [They must change traditional methodologies and further encourage communication]. (S6-Eng)

Diferentes metodologías para motivar más el aprendizaje de inglés, que sea más dinámico y sobretodo se practique hablando, no solo siguiendo un libro [Different methodologies to motivate more the learning of English, it should be more dynamic and above all speaking should be practiced, not just following a book]. (S21-Eng)

The second research question aims at analysing differences in the use of teaching techniques in the three languages. Paired *t*-test analyses were conducted among the teaching

techniques in the three pair of languages. Mean and Standard deviations are shown in Table 4.

The paired-samples *t*-tests for English and Basque teaching techniques revealed that there were statistically significant differences in 10 of the 14 teaching techniques of which nine were learner-centred techniques and one was teacher-centred. The mean difference between English and Basque was significant for TT9, t (100) = −8.454, p < .000, d = 84, and Cohen's d indicates a large effect size. As for TT10, the mean difference between English and Basque was also significant, t (100) = −4.348, p < .000, d = 52, and Cohen's d in this case indicates a medium effect size. Besides, the mean difference between English and Basque was significant for the TT11, t (100) = −6.387, p < .000, d = 63, and Cohen's d indicates a medium effect size as well. Regarding the techniques related to TT12, the mean difference between English and Basque was also significant, t (100) = −6.674, p < .000, d = 66, with a medium effect size.

The paired-samples *t*-tests for English and Spanish revealed that there were statistically significant differences in 11 of the 14 teaching techniques. The mean difference between

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation related to the use of teaching techniques in English, Basque and Spanish.

Teaching techniques	English		Basque		Spanish	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
TT1: Students translate literary texts in *English/Basque/Spanish* into their first language and the teacher explains grammatical rules of English/Basque/Spanish that they put into practice through exercises	3.23	1.62	3.00	1.67	3.96	1.95
TT2: Above all, oral language in *English/Basque/Spanish* is encouraged without using the first language so that students learn to think in the target language	4.04	1.53	4.71	1.74	4.55	1.70
TT3: The oral and listening activities in *English/Basque/Spanish* are repeated until they are internalised by the students and become habits.	4.41	1.51	4.11	1.56	4.60	1.53
TT4: Teaching is student-centred, the teacher provides meaningful practice, and remains silent most of the time to subordinate *English/Basque/Spanish* teaching to learning	3.46	1.46	3.84	1.44	4.49	1.49
TT5: Dialogues are taught in *English/Basque/Spanish* through songs, playful and artistic practice so that students overcome psychological barriers to learning	4.04	1.60	4.31	1.57	4.10	1.71
TT6: The *English/Basque/Spanish* teacher encourages peer learning by creating an atmosphere of tolerance and security in the classroom in which the students do not feel intimidated when participating	4.06	1.48	4.62	1.32	4.70	1.34
TT7: Students do listening exercises aimed at reinforcing the understanding of *English/Basque/Spanish* using activities and visual aids to clarify the meaning. Oral production is delayed until students are ready.	4.13	1.46	4.25	1.52	4.31	1.34
TT8: Through games and role-playings real communication situations are simulated offering students the opportunity to interact in *English/Basque/Spanish* and negotiate meanings	3.59	1.53	4.08	1.48	4.18	1.59
TT9: *English/Basque/Spanish* and content (mathematics, natural / social sciences, etc.) are learned at the same time with objectives and activities for both	2.82	1.51	4.74	1.73	4.28	1.76
TT10: Students participate in tasks related to reality that have a specific objective and clear results. The *English/Basque/Spanish* taught must be useful for the development of the task	3.65	1.41	4.46	1.55	4.69	1.45
TT11: Through dialogue with students in *English/Basque/Spanish*, problems related to power (political, economic, etc.) are raised and solved in real life.	2.83	1.53	4.02	1.75	4.53	1.65
TT12: Activities aimed at learning to learn in *English/Basque/Spanish* are carried out: teaching learning strategies, cooperative work or activities that take multiple intelligences into account	3.15	1.45	4.31	1.59	4.61	1.43
TT13: Students work with the tools offered by technology. Knowledge of *English/Basque/Spanish* arises through use and is shaped by experience	3.49	1.44	4.20	1.52	4.54	1.56
TT14: *English/Basque/Spanish* is taught through textual genres (narration, exposition, etc.) and is organised in different stages: the setting, the initial production of a text, workshops on the characteristics of textual genre and the final production	3.00	1.67	4.57	1.58	5.11	1.31

English and Spanish was significant for the TT11, $t(100) = -8.124$, $p < .000$, $d = 80$, and Cohen's d indicates a large effect size. Similarly, the mean difference between English and Spanish was significant for TT12, $t(100) = -8.069$, $p < .000$, $d = 80$, and Cohen's d indicates a large effect size as well. There was a statistical significance between the means of the following techniques with a medium effect size: TT4, $t(100) = -5.579$, $p < .000$, $d = .55$; TT9, $t(100) = -7.317$, $p < .000$, $d = .72$; TT10, $t(100) = -5.735$, $p < .000$, $d = .57$; TT13, $t(100) = -7.707$, $p < .000$, $d = .65$; TT14, $t(100) = -6.582$, $p < .000$, $d = .76$.

The paired-samples t-tests for Spanish and Basque revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the two languages in the use of TT1, TT3, TT4, TT1 and TT14. However, the effect size according to Cohen's d was small for all these items.

In order to answer our third research question, we explored the relationship between the fourteen teaching techniques and the overall satisfaction levels in each of the languages (see Table 5). For that purpose, we calculated the level of LLS of each language based on the sum of the items 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the LLS questionnaire.

Table 5. Correlations between teaching techniques and satisfaction level learning in English, Basque and Spanish.

Teaching techniques	Overall LLS		
	English	Basque	Spanish
TT1: Students translate literary texts in *English/Basque/Spanish* into their first language and the teacher explains grammatical rules of English/Basque/Spanish that they put into practice through exercises	.091	.147	294**
TT2: Above all, oral language in *English/Basque/Spanish* is encouraged without using the first language so that students learn to think in the target language	.241*	.109	.158
TT3: The oral and listening activities in *English/Basque/Spanish* are repeated until they are internalised by the students and become habits.	−.077	.248*	.151
TT4: Teaching is student-centred, the teacher provides meaningful practice, and remains silent most of the time to subordinate *English/Basque/Spanish* teaching to learning	.300**	.309**	.345**
TT5: Dialogues are taught in *English/Basque/Spanish* through songs, playful and artistic practice so that students overcome psychological barriers to learning	.222*	.142	.351**
TT6: The *English/Basque/Spanish* teacher encourages peer learning by creating an atmosphere of tolerance and security in the classroom in which the students do not feel intimidated when participating	.484**	.331**	.377**
TT7: Students do listening exercises aimed at reinforcing the understanding of *English/Basque/Spanish* using activities and visual aids to clarify the meaning. Oral production is delayed until students are ready.	.205*	.300**	.391**
TT8: Through games and role-playings real communication situations are simulated offering students the opportunity to interact in *English/Basque/Spanish* and negotiate meanings	.413**	.224*	.383**
TT9: *English/Basque/Spanish* and content (mathematics, natural / social sciences, etc.) are learned at the same time with objectives and activities for both	.314**	.336**	.254*
TT10: Students participate in tasks related to reality that have a specific objective and clear results. The *English/Basque/Spanish* taught must be useful for the development of the task	.216*	.287**	.333**
TT11: Through dialogue with students in *English/Basque/Spanish*, problems related to power (political, economic, etc.) are raised and solved in real life.	.299**	.228*	.245*
TT12: Activities aimed at learning to learn in *English/Basque/Spanish* are carried out: teaching learning strategies, cooperative work or activities that take multiple intelligences into account	.411**	.275**	.276**
TT13: Students work with the tools offered by technology. Knowledge of *English/Basque/Spanish* arises through use and is shaped by experience	.404**	.288**	.258**
TT14: *English/Basque/Spanish* is taught through textual genres (narration, exposition, etc.) and is organised in different stages: the setting, the initial production of a text, workshops on the characteristics of textual genre and the final production	.376**	.296**	.309**

*$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

As shown in Table 5, we found weak positive correlation between the technique based on TT4 and the overall level of LLS in the three languages with a high level of satisfaction in English associated with high use of the technique. This means that, those students that have a large exposition to the forth technique had valued positively their language learning experience. Similarly, a weak positive correlation was found for TT6 and the overall level of LLS in the three languages. Additionally, there was a weak positive correlation between TT7 and the LLS in Basque and Spanish as well as TT8 and the level of LLS in English and Spanish; TT9 and the level of LLS in English and Basque; and TT14 and the level of LLS in English and Spanish. Finally, weak positive correlations were found among TT5 and LLS in Spanish; TT10 and Spanish; TT12 and English; and TT13 and English.

The results from the open-ended question also show a preference towards the use of learner-centred methods. These results were extended by participants' perceptions:

Siempre ha sido una enseñanza centrada en el estudio de la gramática y su aplicación en diferentes ejercicios, y no se ha centrado en el uso del inglés utilizando metodologías motivantes [It has always been a teaching focused on the study of grammar and its application in different exercises, and it has not focused on the use of English using motivating methodologies]. (S82-Eng)

Se ha centrado demasiado en aprender de memoria muchos aspectos [It has been focused too much on memorizing many aspects]. (S54-Eng)

Realizar ejercicios simples de rellenar huecos [Complete simple exercises to fill in the gaps]. (S44-Eng)

Besides, no relationship was found between TT2 and LLS in the three languages. In this line, participants showed to have a preference in the use of their entire linguistic repertoire in Spanish classroom:

Gaztelania beste hizkuntzekin batera irakastea ikasle elebidunak edo eleaniztunak garatzeko ezinbestekoa dela uste dut. Gainera, haientzako baliagarria ere izango da [I believe that teaching Spanish together with other languages is essential for the development of bilingual or multilingual students. It will also be useful for them]. (S11-Spa)

Gaztelaniaren irakaskuntzan ezinbestekoa iruditzen zait gaztelania beste hizkuntzen irakaskuntzarekin nahastea, adibidez, euskararekin edo ingelesarekin [In the teaching of Spanish, I think it is essential to mix Spanish with the teaching of other languages, such as Basque or English]. (S10-Spa)

Hizkuntzaren inguruan zerbait hobetu behar bada metodologia aldetik egin behar da. Hizkuntza guztiak bateratzeko ahalegina egin beharko litzateke eta euskararekin batera, eskutik, ikaste prozesua eraikitzen hasi elkarlanean [If something needs to be improved in terms of language it needs to be done in terms of methodology. An effort should be made to unify all the languages and, together with Basque language, we should start working together to build the learning process]. (S16-Spa)

Discussion

The first research question addresses participants' language learning satisfaction (LLS) in English, Basque and Spanish from primary education to university. In general, students were more satisfied with their Spanish learning, followed by Basque and English. If we look at the data on satisfaction at each educational stage, overall, participants show

more satisfaction in the process of learning Spanish followed by Basque and lastly English. In primary education, the satisfaction level is very similar for Basque and Spanish being the former slightly better evaluated.

Due to the challenges that the Basque education system has had in the development of multilingualism, and with respect to the abovementioned difference, it is quite common for the tutor teacher to teach both Basque and Spanish whilst English is usually taught by teachers specialised in foreign language with a sufficient level of English. Therefore, the transferability of teaching techniques and other curriculum contents will further require the coordination of English and Basque/Spanish teachers (see also, O'Duibhir & Cummins, 2012).

In fact, according to qualitative results, students demanded a native-like level of Basque and English to teachers. This idealisation of the native speaker is well rooted in our society and reduces the variations that occur in multilingualism in a too simple dichotomy (native/non-native) (Ortega, 2019). As the results of the qualitative analysis show, this ideology also reduces students' perception on their teachers' value and takes for granted non-native teacher's own resources as bi/multilinguals and their language learning experiences.

In addition, the majority of the participants had Spanish as their L1 and this is the majority language in their social context. However, due to the exposition to Basque at school, students in Basque programs usually achieve similar language skills in Spanish and Basque at the end of the compulsory education. As English is a FL in our context, it has a scarce presence in the society, and students' exposition is mainly limited to school, particularly in primary education. Therefore, students' language skills in English are substantially lower in comparison to Spanish and Basque, and this may prevent the implementation of learner-centred meaningful activities in class, if only the target language is allowed in the teaching and learning process. That is, the use of students' L1 as scaffold (Lin, 2015; Swain & Lapkin, 2013) to learn English may facilitate more meaningful learning experiences. In fact, the need to rethink the teaching of English toward more motivating instructional practices is also expressed in the qualitative data. This finding goes in line with other studies that found that instructional practices have motivational effects in students learning (Hickey et al., 2001; Nie & Lau, 2010).

The second research question addresses the differences in the teaching techniques (TT) used by professionals in the three languages. As the quantitative analysis showed, differences stand out especially between the techniques used to learn English and Spanish, and Basque and English. If we look at the overall use of the techniques, among the most used techniques in the learning of English, participants reported to repeat oral and listening activities in the target language until they are internalised by the students and become habits (TT3) and training participants in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. They also highlighted TT7, reinforcing the understanding of English and delaying oral production until students are ready. This technique is based on James Asher's hypothesis that understanding precedes production in language learning. This idea also fits with Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach and the Direct Method as the focus is placed on developing basic communication skills while receiving meaningful exposure to the TL or comprehensible input. These techniques are focused on students who have low language competence in the target language or beginner learners. In this line, learning dialogues through songs, playful and artistic practices (TT5) was also extensively used

among participants. In contrast, when learning through Basque and Spanish, participants reported a substantial use of techniques that offer a more meaningful learning experience to students in which more complex communicative skills are required (didactic sequences, TT14; task-based language teaching, TT10; strategy training, cooperative learning and multiple intelligences, TT12; and participatory approaches, TT11). As mentioned above a didactic proposition that allows students to use their whole linguistic repertoire may facilitate the use of more meaningful and motivating teaching techniques (Leonet et al., 2017, 2020).

Participants also revealed that according to their experience in language learning, teachers, regardless of the language they teach, encouraged peer learning by creating atmospheres of tolerance and security in the classroom in which students do not feel intimidated when participating (TT6). As it is widely known, language anxiety is a decisive variable in second and foreign language learning (see Dewaele et al., 2008, for a review). This is also related to Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach in the way that creating a low affective filter is also a condition for acquisition. This lowering of the affective filter is thus met when the classroom atmosphere is one in which anxiety is reduced and students' self-confidence is boosted. Thus, the idea of reducing anxiety is behind many of the language learning techniques in FL classroom. For instance, behind the TT5, which proposes to overcome psychological barriers to learning through songs, playful and artistic practice that was also among the most used techniques in English.

With respect to the third research question, we do not find strong relation among LLS in English, Basque and Spanish and the use of any of the 14 teaching techniques in their respective languages. Weak relationships were found among some learner-centred teaching techniques and LLS in the three languages but not in teacher-centred techniques. According to Antón (1999) learner-centred approaches enhance the opportunities students and teachers have to negotiate about various aspects of language and language teaching. In turn, this creates a favourable environment for L2 learning. In contrast, teacher-centred approaches have rarely shown to provide opportunities for negotiation. For example, it seems that students positively valued teachers who attempt to create an atmosphere of tolerance and security to practice languages (TT6). Participants who experienced a large exposition to this technique also indicated to have had a satisfactory experience in language learning. As mentioned, anxiety is a decisive variable in second and foreign language learning, which affects students' communicative performance in their learning process (Dewaele et al., 2008; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). In these sense, it seems that the attempt of the teachers is positively valued by our participants regardless of the target language.

The promotion of students' self-regulated learning through previously designed meaningful activities (TT4) was also weakly related to LLS in the three languages. This finding suggests that, in some way, the participants who had the opportunity to work autonomously through meaningful activities recognise the importance of knowing how to handle their own learning process. This is in line with Bjork et al. (2013) who highlighted the importance of learning how to learn, as an essential skill in today's society. In this line, although participants reported a low exposition to TT12 (leaning strategy training, cooperative learning and multiple intelligence approach) in English language learning, this technique is also weakly related to LLS in English. Other studies that focus on students' perceptions about language learning processes have also reported the necessity to

offer students meaningful ways to use languages in the classroom and to engage in their learning process (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016). Teaching techniques aiming at training students on the use of cognitive and metacognitive skills are transferable not only from one activity to another, but also among different languages (Cummins, 2017). Therefore, schools' language planning should enhance connexion between language programs in order to facilitate this transferability (Elorza & Muñoa, 2008; O'Duibhir & Cummins, 2012). This implies to create an integrated curriculum that not only facilitates the transferability of linguistic aspects such as lexicon and morphology (Orcasitas-Vicandi, 2019a, 2019b) but also highlights complementary aspects of the learning processes and facilitates the transfer, applicability and generalisation of what has been learned in one language to others. Some participants favoured this idea in the open questions.

Moreover, one of the most used techniques in the three languages is related to encourage students to use oral language without using the L1 so that students learn to think in the target language (TT2). However, there is not any relationship with this item and the LLS in any of the languages and even some participants favour the idea of using their entire linguistic repertoire in the open question. This is particularly emphasised in the case of Basque language teaching. In fact, as a minority language, the strategy to protect Basque has been to keep it isolated from other languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017), also in educational contexts (Leonet et al., 2017). This monolingual assumption has been extensively reported (see, Cummins, 2017) and its use has been embodied through different language teaching approaches, as for example the Direct Method as its basic principle is to avoid any translation from students L1. In this way, students are encouraged to express meaning through the use of demonstration and visual aids (see, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013) without the support of the students previous language knowledge. However, there was no relationship with this item and the LLS in any of the languages and some participants favour the idea to use their entire linguistic repertoire in the open question.

Although weak, it is interesting the relationship found between English LLS and content-based language teaching. These positive perceptions toward CLIL approach are in line with other studies (Doiz et al., 2014; Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016). However, other authors claim that CLIL entails certain deficiencies in the acquisition of the content (Cenoz et al., 2014; Fernández-Sanjurjo et al., 2019). For this reason, there is a need to explore ways that provide students with an integrated and balanced learning of curricular content and linguistic competence in the foreign language. In this line, there are more and more studies that support the use of the L1 as scaffold in CLIL classrooms (Lin, 2015) or other ways of translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014; Lin & He, 2017; Nikula & Moore, 2019).

Even though this study raises some valuable contributions to the understanding of language acquisition in a multilingual context with a minority language, it also has some limitations. Among these limitations, the low number of participants that studied through Spanish needs to be mentioned. According to the last sociolinguistic research conducted in the BAC, 65.7% of the students have Basque as the medium of instruction, 15.8% have Spanish and 17.9% have both (EUSTAT, 2020). In this way, our percentages were consistent with our linguistic reality and offered a quite accurate picture of overall students' perceptions about language learning in the three linguistic models (i.e. instruction through Spanish, Basque or both). In addition, we are aware of the fact that factors such as language status or exposure may have influenced participants' responses. That is why we opted for a mixed methodology where qualitative results complemented

quantitative data by providing a broader view of students' beliefs. We think that it is important to investigate the use of teaching techniques in compulsory education and to know students' own assessment to identify possible ways towards a more integrated way of language teaching.

To finish, two main pedagogical implications need to be mentioned here. First, it seems that a switch from traditional teacher-centred to learner-centred classrooms may be beneficial in language teaching, especially in FL teaching. This idea arises thanks to the general picture we got from comparing the three languages of our education system. In this way, our results showed that students declared a higher level of satisfaction when they were proactive in their learning process, engaged in meaningful learning experiences and their communicative skills were required. This happened in Spanish and Basque classes but less often in English classes. We related this results to a lower proficiency level in the foreign language, and suggest that didactic proposition that allows students to use their whole linguistic repertoire could facilitate the use of more meaningful and motivating teaching techniques also in FL teaching.

Second, in order to design appropriate pedagogical approaches for language teaching in multilingual contexts with a minority language, we should consider the languages taught and known by students as essential resources in the acquisition processes. Although the differences between languages regarding their status and presence in society may require different pedagogical strategies at times, we firmly believe that a multilingual approach (i.e. where students can make use of their entire linguistic repertoire and the similarities between languages are understood as opportunities to maximise learning), we can favour the use of communicative and student-centered teaching techniques in the three languages. In this sense, this study can be understood as a previous step towards the design of these strategies. Future research should investigate the use of these techniques in educational contexts that adopt new educational paradigms such as translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014).

In this way, apart from cross-referencing L1, L2 and FL curriculum (i.e. integrated language curriculum), teaching approaches that use students' entire linguistic repertoire should be considered to avoid the monolingual bias. This multilingual approach could help dismantle the idealisation of the native speakers, while recognising the advantages of being bi/multilingual as students and teachers. Additionally, in order to protect and promote the minority language, its isolation is not regarded as a solution. In this sense, students favoured the use of their entire linguistic repertoire, especially in Basque classes, as a resource that would facilitate their oral production. This goes in line with the studies that argue that even if language isolation has been used to protect regional minority languages in the past it is no longer a useful policy in a globalised world, and propose translanguaging (i.e. pedagogically oriented spontaneous language practices) as a valuable tool to promote these minority languages (see also Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). In this way, multilingual education faces different challenges compared to the past, and needs to adapt itself to this new reality with different tools.

Conclusion

This study is not, however, about finding the 'best approach' or promote one method over another. We try to set the study of pedagogical practices for language learning within a

multilingual paradigm and place learners at the centre of the context. Teaching practices that respond to the new necessities placed by globalisation need to consider the diversity in the classroom and the social context. Monolingual assumptions are not suitable any longer in multilingual environments and, as such, analysing the way language teachers proceed and the assumptions behind these procedures may be particularly worthy to understand some of the key elements that affect effective language teaching in the twenty-first century. Ultimately, understanding these procedures may lead us expand and reimagine meaningful ways to educate students in a more effective way.

Disclosure statement

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